Claims

1.   A broadband system for providing access to remote services to a number of user terminals over a broadband network, the system storing data about the services and data about users, wherein the system is arranged to receive requests from user

5   terminals for access to the services and to authorise access to the services in dependence on the stored data, wherein upon authorising access to a service for a user at a user terminal, the system is arranged to use the data stored about the service to redirect the user terminal to access the service and to record subsequent events occurring between the user terminal and the service.

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2.   A system according to claim 1, in which the system is arranged to dynamically generate a user interface for use by a user on a user terminal for accessing the services, the interface being generated in dependence on the data stored about the services and the data stored about the user.

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3.   A system according to claim 2, in which data stored about a service includes data on the availability of the service, wherein a user interface only allows access to a service if the data indicates it is available.

20   4.   A system according to claim 3, in which access to a service from the user interface is via a link, wherein a generated user interface only includes a link to a service if the data indicates it is available.

5.   A system according to claim 2, in which data stored about a user includes data

25   on a user's subscription to the system, wherein a user interface only allows access to a

service if the data on the user's subscription indicates the user's subscription covers that service.

6. A system according to claim 5, in which access to a service from the user

5   interface is via a link, wherein a generated user interface only includes a link to a service if the user's subscription covers that service.

7. A system according to claim 2, in which data stored about a user includes data on restrictions to access of services from the system, wherein a user interface only

10   allows access to a service if the data on restrictions does not prohibit access to the service.

8. A system according to claim 7, in which access to a service from the user interface is via a link, wherein a generated user interface only includes a link to a

15   service if the user is not restricted from accessing that service.

9. A system according to claim 1, in which the data stored about a service includes the service's address, wherein upon authorising access, the system uses the address to instruct the user terminal to communicate with the service at the address.

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10. A system according to claim 1, wherein the or each service is arranged to communicate events that occur between the user terminal and the service to the system for recordal.

11.   A system according to claim 1, further comprising an adapter for passing communications and events between a service and the system, the adapter being arranged to capture and convert necessary communications and events from the service into a form processable by the system and to transmit them to the system for

5   recordal.

12.   A system according to claim 1, wherein when redirecting the user terminal to access the service, the system provides an identifier for use by the service when providing events for recordal, the system storing the events in dependence on the

10   identifier.

13.   A system according to claim 1, including an accounting subsystem, the accounting subsystem receiving events occurring between the service and the user terminal and recording the events against the user's account.

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14.   A system according to claim 13, in which the accounting subsystem communicates with a billing system for billing the user in dependence on events recorded by the accounting subsystem.

20   15.   A system according to claim 1, including a storage subsystem, the storage subsystem accepting content for supply by the services to user terminals, wherein one or more of the services are arranged to access the content in the storage subsystem for supply to user terminals.

16.   A system according to claim 15, in which access by a service to content within the storage subsystem is recorded as an event by the system.

17.   A system according to claim 15, wherein when redirecting the user terminal to
5   access the service, the system provides an identifier for use by the service when providing events for recordal, the system storing the events in dependence on the identifier.

18.   A system according to claim 17, in which a service accesses content in the
10 storage subsystem using the identifier, the system being arranged to cross-reference the identifier with data about the user to determine whether the user is permitted to access the content, the system authorizing or denying access accordingly.

19.   A service platform for allowing a user to access remote services using a user
15 terminal via a broadband network, the platform providing accounting, authentication, authorization and security modules to the remote services, the authorization and security modules being arranged to accept requests for access to the remote services from users and to authorise access in dependence on data stored about the user by redirecting the user terminal to the remote service, the accounting module being
20 arranged to communicate with the remote service to obtain data on communication between the remote service and the user terminal for subsequent billing of the user.

20.   A method of providing access to remote services to a number of user terminals over a broadband network, the method comprising the steps of:
25 storing data about the services and data about users;

receiving requests from user terminals for access to the services;

authorising access to the services in dependence on the stored data;

using the data stored about the service to redirect the user terminal to access the service; and,

5   recording subsequent events occurring between the user terminal and the service.

21.   A method according to claim 20, further comprising the step of authenticating a user requesting access to the services at a user terminal using the data about users, wherein the data about services includes authentication data for use in accessing the

10   services, the step of using the data further comprising the step of using the authentication data for the service to authenticate the user at the user terminal with the service.

22.   A method according to claim 20, further comprising the step of dynamically

15   generating a user interface for use by a user on a user terminal for accessing the services, the interface being generated in dependence on the data stored about the services and the data stored about the user.

23.   A method according to claim 20, in which the data stored about a service

20   includes the service's address, wherein the step of using the data comprises the step of using the address to instruct the user terminal to communicate with the service at the address.

24.   A method according to claim 23, wherein the step of using the data further

25   comprises the step of providing an identifier for use by the service when providing

events for recordal, the step of recording events comprising storing the events in dependence on the identifier.

25.   A method according to claim 20, further comprising the step of billing the user

5   in dependence on events recorded in the recording step.

26.   A computer readable medium, on which is stored a computer program of instructions for controlling a general purpose computer to providing access to remote services to a number of user terminals over a broadband network, comprising, in

10   combination:

means for storing data about the services and data about users in a memory;

means for receiving requests from user terminals for access to the services;

means for authorising access to the services in dependence on the data in the memory;

means for using the data stored about the service to redirect the user terminal to access

15   the service; and,

means for recording subsequent events occurring between the user terminal and the service.

27.   A computer readable medium according to claim 26, further comprising means

20   for authenticating a request for access to the services in dependence on the data about users, wherein the data about the services includes authentication data for accessing the services, wherein the means for using the data includes means for using the authentication data to authenticate the user terminal with the service.

28. A program storage device readable by a machine and encoding a program of instructions for executing the method steps of claim 20.

29. A system according to claim 1, in which the data about the services includes authentication data for required to access the services, wherein upon authorising access to a service for a user at a user terminal, the system is arranged to communicate the service's authentication data to the service to authenticate the user at the user terminal for access to the service.

30. An intermediate system for offering centralised access and support functions to a plurality of remote systems of digital data service providers comprising accounting, authentication, authorization and security modules, the authentication, authorization and security modules being arranged to provide access to the remote systems by checking the authorisation of access requests and redirecting authorised requests to the remote system, the accounting module being arranged to communicate with the remote system to obtain data on resultant access of the system's services for subsequent billing.

31. An intermediate system according to claim 31, further comprising an adapter arranged to monitor the remote system to obtain data on resultant access of the system's services and to communicate the data to the accounting module.